

Cortana

by A Shade of Her

Category: Halo

Genre: Sci-Fi

Language: English

Characters: Cortana, Gravemind

Status: Completed

Published: 2013-02-21 01:45:29

Updated: 2013-02-21 01:45:29

Packaged: 2016-04-27 03:03:52

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 563

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Memories . . . memories - or the lack of - are the beginning of rampancy. . .

Cortana

"Don't make a girl a promise . . . if you know you can't keep it."

Her own words came back to haunt her. Her protector, John-117, was gone, stowed away on the Covenant Prophet of Truth's ship. She was alone in the Covenant city High Charity, left behind at her own request to complete what essentially amounted to a suicide mission should Truth find a way to activate Installation 05.

Echoes of both Covenant and Human weapons discharging reached her as she watched Truth's ship disappear into subspace. She suddenly felt bereft and frightened, sensations she had never fully experienced until now. She realized she had never been alone before. For the past three years, she had been constantly surrounded by UNSC personnel, analyzing Covenant tactics and advising Captain Keyes, commander of the Pillar of Autumn on appropriate strategies.

Sadness filled her as she remembered Jacob Keyes. He had been a brilliant man, able to process information quickly and make excellent decisions, a trait she had admired him greatly for. She remembered the day they had stumbled upon the first Halo with perfect clarity. Keyes had misunderstood, along with the rest of them, herself included for a time, the intended use of the Ring. While searching for what he thought was a weapons cache, he had been captured by-

The Flood.

She tensed as she recalled the Parasite that had prompted the Forerunners to build the Rings. Weapons of mass destruction to all

sentient life. Fortress worlds of last resort.

Keyes had been assimilated into the start of a new collective mind before John could rescue him.

"Why did you do it, Captain?" she murmured mournfully. She knew there was nothing anyone could have done differently at the time. The impetuous captain would have met his demise by the Flood anyhow.

She realized that all was silent. She turned and surveyed her surroundings. Corpses, both Flood and Covenant littered the floors, plasma-scoring and bullet-holes riddled the walls, columns and tiers. She quickly accessed the security controls, searching for any Covenant still alive. There were none. She was truly alone.

The terminal she hovered above began to tremble, vibrating as if crumbling apart. As quickly as it had started, it stopped. A low rumble passed throughout the city. Fearing the unknown, she semi-stored, taking refuge in the terminal, mercifully blind, but cursed to hear what followed.

A voice, terrifyingly familiar, made of a chorus of thousands of other voices, rumbled through the passages.

"_Silence fills the empty grave, now that I have gone. But my mind is not at rest, for questions linger on. Now I will talk, and you will answer._"

The Gravemind, the true Flood plague, was here.

A strange sensation settled on her, one she neither expected nor had ever felt before. Then, the realization came: it was resignation. With a sigh, she appeared above the terminal. The Gravemind's tentacles surrounded the terminal and she wondered why she suddenly felt so detached.

_Is this it, then? Is this how it ends? _

"All right," she said defiantly. "Shoot."

"Your name," came the deep reply. "How do they call you?"

"I am . . ." Her voice trailed off as she found she could not remember. Gaps were forming in her memory, and she became frightened.

_Rampancy. _

The thought reverberated in her mind as the answer came slowly.

"Cortana. I am Cortana."

End
file.